

VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSONS (PROHIBITION) ACT 2015: ADVANCING LEGAL PROTECTIONS OF WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA*

Abstract

Violence against Women is a reoccurring phenomenon in Nigeria. It crosses cultures, religions and zones. It is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women. Violence against women is not only a gross human rights violation; it is a public health epidemic and a major impediment to national and global development efforts to reduce poverty. The purpose of this study is to analyze current legislation on violence in Nigeria, the Violence against Person (Prohibition) Act 2015. It is a well designed regulatory instrument and a platform for action to advance, shield and fortify women against violence. The Act prohibits all forms of violence in private and public life and provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims, punishment of offenders, jurisdiction of courts and procedure for prosecution. The approach adopted is a contentment analysis of the provisions of the legislation. The author finds that existing legislations on violence lacked scope, massively discriminate against women and not in line with international best practices. The paper recommends urgent domestication of the Act by States.

Keywords: Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015. Legal Protection, Women, Nigeria, Violence

1. Introduction

Violence against women in Nigeria may be described as epidemic, to address the scourge, several pieces of legislation have been enacted in the past decade at state and federal levels in Nigeria. The Prohibition Against Domestic Violence Law of Lagos¹ was enacted as a response to the rising incidents of violence against women in Lagos State. The State of the Legal system prior to the enactment of the Law was generally unfavourable to women who suffered beatings and abuse from their partners. The Criminal and Penal Codes provide for punishment for assault but the enforcement agencies, such as the police were not interested in pursuing cases of a ‘domestic’ nature when there were more ‘Serious’ crimes such as robbery to deal with², thus most women would not consider taking their partners before the Law courts. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition Act (VAPP) was passed into law in 2015 as a result of agitations for protection of persons against the different forms of violence, maiming of spouse and pouring acid. It was the need to enlarge the scope of legal protection especially women the cross bearer that led to the enactment of the VAPP Act in 2015. This Act prohibits all forms of violence against Persons, provides effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders. This presupposes that the Law is Prime Facie a good law, Legislative asset and welcome development particularly in advancing the legal protection of women. The Act is an amalgamation of different Laws/bills and an attempt on to do away with anachronistic laws and improvement on the criminal & penal codes³.

2. Meaning of Violence/Etymology

Violence as defined in the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) means any act or attempted act, which cause any person physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, emotional or economic harm whether this occurs in Private or Public Life, in Peace time and in conflict situations⁴. The VAPP Act also defined ‘Violence in the Private Sphere’ to mean any act or attempted act perpetrated by a member of the family, relative, neighbour or member of a community, which causes or may cause any person physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, emotional or economic harm⁵. ‘Violence in the Public Sphere’ was also defined to mean any act or attempted act perpetrated by the state or non-state actors before, during and after election, in conflict or war situation, which threatens, peace, security and well-being of any person or the nation as a whole⁶. These are great novelties created by the Act to fortify and protect against Violence in all ramifications. The word violence has equally been defined as the use of Physical force,

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¹ State Law No. 15, 2007

² J O Osai, ‘Prohibiting domestic Violence through Legislation in Nigeria’ ><https://www.jstor.org>>stable accessed 2 Nov. 2019.

³ C Amad& E Aladokiye, ‘Violence Against Persons (Prohibition Act 2015, Legislative assets or Liability ><https://www.researchgate.net>. Accessed 2 Nov. 2019. with anachronistic Laws & Improvement on the Criminal and Penal Code

⁴ VAPP Act, S.46

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

accompanied by fury, vehemence or outrage, unlawfully exercised with the intent to harm⁷. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers Violence as the intentional use of force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself or another person, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, Psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation⁸. ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, noted that for the purposes of this Declaration the term ‘Violence Against Women’ means any act of gender-based Violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of Liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life⁹.

The United Nation was alarmed that opportunities for Women to achieve legal, social, political and economic equality in society are limited, *inter alia*, by continuing and endemic violence. Thus, the national Assembly convinced in the light of the above that there is need for a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against persons, women in particular passed the bill to ensure the elimination of Violence. The VAPP Act immensely dealt with issues in this ‘Declaration’, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993 to the writer is the modern ‘Etymology of Violence Against Persons’¹⁰

3. Highlight of Causes of Violence

Cultural and social norms socialize males to be aggressive, powerful, unemotional, and controlling, these contributed to social acceptance of men as dominant. Similarly, expectation of females as passive, nurturing, submissive and emotional, also reinforce women’s role as weak, powerless and dependent upon men. The socialization of both men and women has resulted in an unequal power relationship between men and women. Through use of violence to perpetuate, men desire to gain control to exploit for personal benefit, to be in commanding position all time show-casing supremacy: Another word for power and control is patriarchy- many patriarchal society are patrilineal-inheritance by male. WOMEN only have ‘user right’. Violence persists because of women extreme respect and obedience, submissive, acquiescence, compliance to men. A Yoruba woman calls her husband ‘Olowo-Ori-mi- (one who owns me). In the North, section 55 Panel Code¹¹ encourages beating of wife for purpose of correction. This is against section 34 CFRN 1999 on right to dignity of human person. Under Islamic law, men are the protector and maintainers of women – Quran 4:34 because Allah has preferred one over the other, this in Arabic word is QUWWAMUN¹² (Protector and Maintainers) this shows the weak nature of women. Section 26 (2) of the Constitution does not allow Nigerian women to transmit her nationality to her foreign husband, whereas the Nigerian man is able to transmit his nationality to his foreign wife.¹³ Section 55 of the Labour Law also prohibits women from working in the night. Inadequate legal framework exposes to further harm and abuse. Section 353 of the Criminal Code¹⁴; makes indecent assault against a male a felonious offence punishable with three years’ imprisonment while section 360 Criminal Code¹⁵ makes a similar offence of indecent assault on females a mere misdemeanor punishable with a maximum of two years imprisonment. Also Section 6 Criminal Code¹⁶ expressly legalized spousal rape ‘Unlawful carnal knowledge means carnal connection which takes place otherwise than between husband and wife’. Section 138 of Evidence Act¹⁷ lays the onus on the Victims (of rape) to present proof beyond reasonable doubt.

There are different treatments of married women depending on the type of marriage contracted; this is unjust and leads to violence for instance, all the privileges and protection accorded to women under the criminal code¹⁸ apply only to wives of Christian marriage. The law indeed gives tacit approval to the lower status accorded to customary law wife through the use of provisions which only protect stationary married women and sometimes women, who

⁷ B A Garner, *Black’s Law Dictionary* (U.S.A Thomson West. 2004)

⁸ WHO, Definition of Violence <[https://www.who.int/violencedefinition/violence prevention](https://www.who.int/violencedefinition/violence%20prevention) > accessed 2 Nov. 2014

⁹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104 of 20 December, 1993.

¹⁰ O Nwankwo, *Human Rights of Women, A Compilation of International Human Rights Treaties and Instrument* (Nigeria, Peculiar Instinct Production, 2005) p. 179

¹¹ Cap. N.46, LFN 2004

¹² M A Ambali, *the Practice of Muslim family law in Nigeria* (Lagos: Princeton & Associates Publishing Co. Ltd. 2014 (P.234)

¹³ C. Arinze – Umobi, *Domestic Violence Against Women in Nigeria: A Legal Anatomy* (Onitsha: Folmech Printing and Pub. Co. Ltd, 2008) P.43

¹⁴ Criminal Code Act, C 38 LFN 2004

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Cap. E14 LFN 2004

¹⁸ Sections 10, 33, 34 and 36 of the Criminal Code Act C 38 LFN 2004

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have contracted Islamic marriage¹⁹Under the Evidence Act, Sections 160-162, dealing with compellable and competent witnesses provide what spouses married under stationary Law cannot be compelled, nor are they competent to give evidence against their partners unless at the instance of the other. Equally, a party to a marriage by Islamic Law cannot be compelled to disclose any communication made to him or her by other party during such a marriage¹⁹, thus, only a wife married under customary Law is left without such protection.²⁰

Again, because of illiteracy most women are not aware of their right; because they are not informed they are deformed. One major issue that made women susceptible to be treated as slave is poverty. Men control the world because they hold the key to power greed marked as economics. Harmful Practices (traditional) such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is a removal of the clitoris and the labia minora (vaginal lips) exist. The reasons are to please the husband, prevention of promiscuity etc. There are cases of Child marriage. The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) 1989 define a child as human being below age 18 years, same as Article 2 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child Section 117(2). 1999 CFRN- for purpose of voting any citizen below 18 years can't vote and be voted for. Child marriage is a union of an adult and a girl under 18 years. In preference for sons, girl child is regarded as a bad investment, because she will marry outside family. Infanticide is common among female child. In China female babies are drowned and abandoned. In India 58% of all death of female infants was due to infanticide. In Nigeria a married man cannot just die, the wife must have a hand in his death, so widows are subjected to untold hardship; she is denied inheritance, in *Sognunro v Sognunro*²¹- it was held that inheritance follows the blood in Yoruba custom. In Igbo custom she cannot inherit or administer her husband estate²²; she cannot eat washing hand during mourning: She drinks the water used in washing the dead body.

4. Forms of Violence

Violence against women can be broadly categorized as follows: There is Physical Violence which is the most common form of Violence against women in our society. This is the inflicting of injury on the body, causing harm, pain and sometimes long lasting disability. Examples of this abound: wife battery, hitting, acid bath, murder, female genital mutilation, and early marriage, widowhood practices etc. women suffer this kind of violence from their immediate family, community or state²³. Psychological or mental violence includes variety of actions and inactions or behaviours targeted at the emotional level. It includes harassments, threat, and verbal abuse, denial of financial and personal resources and discrimination of different types. Sexual Violence such as Rape is the most popular form of sexual assault. It could also manifest in form of sexual harassment and incest abuse, while sexual harassment constitutes unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, requests, advances made by a male to a female. There are also harmful traditional practices which take place in the private sphere or within the domestic domain.²⁴ It can manifest in the form of wife battery, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation, child labour, forced and early marriage, female genital mutilation or female circumcision, marital rape, widowhood practices, abandonment of wife and children without means of sustenance, etc. Domestic violence is regarded as a gender-specific violence because it is targeted at women and girls. There are also cases of Socio-Economic Violence. There are women's economic dependence on men, limited access to cash and credit, discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights; use of communal lands and maintenance after divorce, limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors, and limited access to education and training for women. Cases of Legal Violence abound: Lesser legal status of women either by written law and or by practice; Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance; legal definition of rape and domestic abuse; treatment of legal literacy among women; insensitive treatment of women by Police and Judiciary.²⁵

5. Violence Consequences

Physical effects can range from permanent disability or death. It can lead to variety of Physical, Psycho-social and health related problems that often destroy the survivor's self-worth and quality of life. Psychological effects include post-traumatic stress, depression, anger, anxiety and fear, shame, self-hate and self-blame, mental illness,

¹⁹ J N Ezeilo, *Women, Law and Human Rights* (Enugu: AGENA PUBLISHERS, 2011) P 183

²⁰ Ikenga Oraegbunam, 'Equity, not equality as sameness', in N. Ezenwa-Ohaeto (Ed), *Power, Gender Relations, Character and Nation Building*, Awka, Fab Anieh Nig. Ltd., 2015, pp. 63-79.

²¹ (1929) 9 N.L.R.79

²² *UbomavIbeneme* (1967) F.N.L.R 251

²³ C. Arinze – Umobi – Op. Cit.

²⁴ M. K. Amid & Ikenga K. E. Oraegbunam, 'Rethinking the Penalty of Harmful Traditional Practices Committed on Pregnant Women and Children under the Ethiopian Criminal Code', *African Journal of Criminal Law and Jurisprudence* 4(2019), 12-21.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 320

suicidal thoughts and behavior. Sexual and reproductive effects include miscarriage, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STD including HIV/AIDS. Menstrual disorders, pregnancy complications, sexual disorders. With regard to educational effects, education becomes an agent of social change, lack of education brings the nation to stand still, no development, no change of attitudes and conducts. Economic effects involve feminization of poverty, losses of livelihood, economic dependency. Social effects result to loss of role or functions in society, social stigma, rejection and isolation, increased gender inequalities.

6. Synopsis of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 (VAPP Act)

Violence against women is the most surreptitious form of violation of human rights of women, in particular right to personal security, liberty and bodily integrity. The violence against persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 is a national Law applicable throughout the country irrespective of gender, religion, tribe, custom, nature of marriage. The VAPP Act is an improvement on the penal and criminal code in relation to violence. The VAPP Act Commendably covers most of the prevalent forms of violence: Rape; inflicting physical injury; Coercion; offensive conduct; female circumcision or genital mutilations; frustrating investigation; willfully making of false statement; Forceful ejection from home; Deprivation of liberty of a person; Damage to property with intent to cause distress; Forced financial dependence or economic abuse; Forced isolation or separation from friends; Emotional, verbal and Psychological abuse; Harmful widowhood practices; Abandonment of spouse, children and other dependants without sustenance; Stalking; Intimidation; Spousal battery; Harmful traditional practices; Administration of substance with intent; Political violence; Violence by state actors; Incest; Indecent exposure.

6.1. Sexual Offences: Rape, Incest, Indecent Exposure

Rape

The offences of rape is committed when a person intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with any other part of his or her body or anything else without consent of the person or consent if obtained by force or by means of intimidation of any kind or by fear of harm or by means of false and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act or the use of any substance or additive capable of taking away the will of such person. The Act recognizes that rape can occur via various mediums. Also that perpetrators of rape are not limited to men neither are women the only victims. In recent times sexual pleasure are derived in various ways. Penile penetration need not be in the vagina alone, the mouth and anus of a woman are also through which penetrations can occur. A man can also be violated through his mouth and anus. It also recognizes that other parts of the human body can be instrumental in penetration like the finger as well as objects. The Act provides for a punitive measure of life imprisonment. The Act provided compensation from victims of Rape and a Register for convicted sexual offenders to be kept and made accessible to the public. The Act provides for other imprisonments for offenders. Offender who is less than 14 years of age, maximum of 14 years imprisonment; Rape by a group of person, the offenders are liable jointly to a maximum of 20 years imprisonment without option of fine²⁶

Incest is another sexual offence stipulated in the Act. This crime is committed when a person knowing and willfully has carnal knowledge of another within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity with or without consent, the prescribed punishment if without consent is 10years imprisonment without an option or fine; if done with consent the punishment is 5 years.

Indecent Exposure: the Act provides that this crime is committed when a person knowingly or willingly exposes his or her genital organs with the intention of causing distress to the other party or induces to commit an act of violence. The offender is liable to a term of imprisonment for not less than 1 year or to fine not exceeding ₦500,000 or both.

6.2 Physical Violence

The offence of physical violence covers: Physical injury, female genital mutilation, spouse battery, harmful substance attack, administering a substance with intent.

Physical Injury: This offence is committed when a person wilfully causes and inflicts physical injury on a person, by means of any weapon, substance or objects. The punishment is imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or on option of fine not exceeding ₦100,000.00 or both. Attempt to commit this offence, the punishment is 3 years imprisonment

²⁶ S.1 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015

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or a fine not exceeding ₦200,000.00 or both. A person who incites, aid, abets or counsels another to commit the offence is liable to 3 years imprisonment or a fine not exceeding ₦200,000 or both.²⁷

Female Genital Mutilation: This offence is committed when a person performs female genital mutilation or engages another to do so. The punishment is 4 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both. Attempt to commit this offence attract 2 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦100,000.00 or both.²⁸

Spousal Battery: The act made it a crime to batter one's spouse, this is the intentional and unlawful use of force or violence on a person, beating or striking against the person's will with the intention of causing bodily harm. The offender is guilty of an offence punishable with 3 years imprisonment or fine of ₦200,000. Attempts attract 1 year imprisonment or to a fine not exceeding ₦100,000.00 or both. Aiding and abetting 1 year imprisonment or to a fine not exceeding ₦200,000.00 or both.²⁹

Harmful Substance Attack: The Act provides that a person who uses chemical, biological or any other harmful liquid on another is punishable with life imprisonment without an option of fine. Attempt of this offence attract 25 years imprisonment without an option of fine, same as aiding and abetting.³⁰

Administering a substance with intent: This crime is committed when a person intentionally administers a substance to a person with intention of stupefying or overpowering that person so as to enable any person to engage in sexual activity with that person. The punishment is 10 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦500,000.00 or both.³¹

6.3 Economic Violence: This offence covers forced financial dependence, abandonment of spouse, children and other dependents without sustenance.

Forced Financial Dependence: It is a crime to force financed dependence on another; The offender is liable to 2 years imprisonment or fine of ₦500,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding and abetting carries 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both.³²

Abandonment of Spouse, Children and Dependents Without Sustenance: This crime is committed when a person abandons a wife or husband, children or other dependents without any means of sustenance:- The punishment is 3 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦500,000.00 or both. Attempts, aiding and abetting the punishment is 2 years imprisonment or ₦200,000.00 fine or both.³³

Forceful Ejection from Home: A person who forcefully eject his or her spouse from his or her home or refuses him or her access to his or her home committed an offence punishable by 2 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦300,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding and abetting this offence attract punishment of 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200.000 or both.³⁴

Damage to Property with Intent to Cause Distress: This offence is committed when a person causes mischief or destruction or damage to property of another with intent to cause distress or annoyance to the victim. The punishment is 2 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦300,000.00 or both. Attempt/Accessory after the act is 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both.³⁵ Women are highly protected by the Act Provisions on Economic abuse; this is because economic abuse diminishes the victims' capacity to support themselves; increasing dependence on the perpetrator reduced access to education, employment, career advancement and assets acquirement.

²⁷ S. 2. Ibid.

²⁸ S. 6. Ibid.

²⁹ S. 19. Ibid.

³⁰ S. 21. Ibid.

³¹ S. 22. Ibid.

³² S. 12. Ibid.

³³ S. 16. Ibid.

³⁴ S. 9. Ibid.

³⁵ S. 11. Ibid.

6.4. Psychological Violence: The Act provides for psychological violence often called emotional abuse, which is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behaviour that may result in psychological battering, including anxiety, chronic depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. This covered emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, harmful widowhood practices, intimidation, stalking and offensive conduct.

Emotional, Verbal and Psychology Abuse: Emotional abuse is defined as any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity or self worth of a person. Emotional abuse is synonymously to emotional maltreatment, psychological abuse/battering and soul murder³⁶. Although it doesn't leave physical scars, but indeed have a huge impact on one's confidence and self-esteem. The aim of the emotional abuser is to chip away one's feelings of self-worth and independence. In an emotionally abusive relationship, one feels that there is no way out but the VAPP Act provides that this is a crime when one emotionally, verbally and psychologically abuses another. The punishment is 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both. Attempts, aiding and abetting carries 6 months imprisonment or a fine of ₦100,000.00 or both.³⁷

Harmful Widowhood Practices: In Nigeria some widows go to the extent of attempting suicide due to the harsh maltreatment and emotional torture. This crime of harmful widowhood practices is committed when a person subjected to harmful traditional practices. The offender is liable to 2 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦500,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding and abetting attract 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both.³⁸

Intimidation: This is act of cowering, bullying, manhandling, habitually cruel, threatening and insulting. It is an intentional behaviour that would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities to fear injury, harm or too afraid to do something. It is a crime to intentionally or knowingly put another to fear of bodily injury. The offender is liable to 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦200,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding and abetting 6 months imprisonment or a fine of ₦100,000.00 or both.³⁹

Stalking: This is described as act of following repeatedly, watching, bugging, bothering someone, or loitering outside of or near the building or place where a person resides, works, carries on business constantly in a way that is frightening and dangerous. Significant correlation of stalking related violence includes the presence of threats, substance abuse, aggression, harassment. The alleged offender knows or ought to know, that the course of conduct will cause the other to fear violence. It is criminalized in the Act and the punishment is 2 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦500,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding and abetting 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦100,000.00.⁴⁰

Offensive Conduct: This offence is committed when a person compels another by force or threat to engage in any conduct or act (sexual or otherwise) which is detriment to victims physical or psychological well-being. The offender is liable to 2 years imprisonment or a fine of ₦500,000.00 or both. Attempt, aiding, and abetting 1 year imprisonment or a fine of ₦300,000.00 or both.⁴¹

7. Application of Protection Order

The Act in Part II, Section 28, made provision for protection order, this is unique and excellent provision of the Act. A protection order is an order, issued by a judge to protect a person from another person whose behaviour is abusive, threatening, exploitative or seriously alarming. The Act allows for an application to be brought to the High Court for it to grant a protection order which is effective throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria with no time limit or prescription preventing the applicant from making the application. Commendably, the Act allows the following to make protection order: an complainant, a police officer, accredited service provider, a counselor, health service provider, social worker, teacher who has interest in the well being of the complainant. Where the

³⁶ N Tracy "Emotional Abuse: Definitions, Signs, Symptoms, Examples, Healthy Place, <<https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/emotional-psychological-abuse/emotional-abuse-definitions-signs-symptoms-examples>> accessed 3 Nov. 2019

³⁷ S. 14. Ibid.

³⁸ S. 15. Ibid.

³⁹ S. 18. Ibid.

⁴⁰ S. 17. Violence against (Prohibition) Act, 2015.

⁴¹ S. 5. Ibid.

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complainant is assisted in the request for protection order, it must be with his or her consent, except in circumstances where the complainant is a minor, mentally retarded, unconscious or a person who is satisfied is unable to provide the required consent.⁴²When the application and affidavits is filed in court, the court shall as soon as is reasonably possible make the order. The protection order may prohibit the respondent from: committing any act of domestic violence, enlisting the help of another person to commit the violence, entering a shared household, entering the complainant's home or place of employment or shared household, alienating or renouncing his or her shared household except in favour of the complainant or committing any such act as may be specified in the protection order.⁴³

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that the VAPP Act 2015, made a unique legal protection and promotion of women's rights against violence in Nigeria. The standard setting principles are in tandem with Human Rights standards. It is a fact not in dispute that fight on violence against women can be won through law making. Violence against women exists in difference ramifications with temerity and impunity, the VAPP Act is now a panacea to these conducts. The Act stated array of offences covering various aspects of violence which hitherto were not criminalized like harmful traditional practices, forced financial dependence. The Act made domestic violence an offence, this is because domestic violence is often viewed as domestic problem, private to the participants, where through mediation, the perpetrators foot the medical bills of the victims. It established the National Agency for the prohibition of trafficking in persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) to administer, monitor and investigated alleged cases of violence in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including foreign based organizations acknowledging that government cannot provide all the services alone. The act expanded the meaning of rape and its prohibition; in its progressive nature, it took cognizance of the fact that sex now goes beyond the primary sex organs and thus, extended the scope of rape to include anus and mouth compensation for rape victim and a sex offender register accessible to the public. The Act indeed protected women from sexual harassment. The provisions of the criminal code via sections 252⁴⁴, 253⁴⁵, 360⁴⁶ used to prosecute cases of sexual harassment cannot capture all acts that are seen to amount to sexual harassment. It is correct that women, by their natural creation, endowment and disposition, certain rights are peculiar to them and must be protected. The Act promoted women through equal provisions for sexes. It demystify the age old stereotypes of regarding women as unequal to men, as chattels in some cultures and sacrificial objects for conflict and war settlement . The VAPP Act is an eclipse on certain statutory provisions that are discriminatory. The Act supersedes any other provision on similar offences in the criminal code, penal code and criminal procedure code⁴⁷.The Act assisted victims of violence, male, female and a minor without the assistance of a parent⁴⁸ to seek appropriate redress and remedies for themselves, through the application for protection orders. The equally made a clear acknowledgment of the application of international laws which Nigeria is a party.⁴⁹It is suggested that since the VAPP Act 2015, is a Vanguard of Women's Protection against violence. It should be domesticated within those states that are yet to do so. Advocacy strategies like local and international seminars and conferences, regular public hearings with legislators, government official; campaign in universities, polytechnics, schools and colleges, market places and even motor-parks to ensure awareness of the VAPP Act and its protection of women

⁴² S. 44 Ibid

⁴³VAPP Act Explanatory memorandum.

⁴⁴definition of assault

⁴⁵assaults unlawful

⁴⁶indecent assaults on females

⁴⁷ S.45 VAPP Act

⁴⁸ S.28 (5) Ibid

⁴⁹ S.38 Ibid